

iGEM Homepage Review

by Ethan Chan

As a participant in the iGEM 2009 competition, my first visit to the iGEM homepage was quite appealing. Colorful banners and pictures of the previous competitions filled the top of the page. In order to make this site more appealing, additional pictures should be shown either by having a link on the task bar or make it more dynamic with a slideshow of the pictures. By having a slideshow of past years, the website can reflect the fact that the iGEM competition is an experience that can change your life. Making the site more attractive is a key to drawing more teams to the competition. Links such as "Discussions" and "Log" are located on the task bar where I could quickly locate them. However, I did encounter errors on the web site. The "Teams" tab was not functional at the time of my visit. The other links worked perfectly. As I continued exploring the website, I noted that the layout of the site could vary on different web browsers. This [screenshot](#) shows that the task bar was cut in half in one web browser, which made it very hard to read and access the buttons. This second [screenshot](#) shows the task bar intact and easy to use in another web browser. The first web browser rendered a different view relative to the second browser. The second web browser had the Twitter and Facebook boxes near the bottom which were not present in the page rendered by the first browser. With the popularity of social networking sites, using Twitter and Facebook as a tool is an excellent way to engage more people.

Overall, I was able to navigate smoothly throughout the site. The main page is filled with important dates that make it easy for a visitor to be updated quickly. For someone visiting the site for the first time, it would help to have a brief description about iGEM on the main page. That would obviate the need to click the "About" link on the right hand side of the page.